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unmixed abhorrence expressed by the numerous auditors. It was indeed a revolting sight, and one not readily to be forgotten, the towering and powerfully proportioned son in the prime of life, and apparently with the most hardened callousness, standing side by side to be tried for the same heinous offence with his withered parent, whose age-bowed head scarce reached his shoulder, while her rheumed and still rat-like eye wandered with an eager and restless gaze round the court, as if she was only alive to the novelty of the scene, and utterly unconcerned for the fearful position she stood in. It was absolutely heart-sickening to see how repeatedly the wretched hag pulled her guilty son towards her during the trial, to whisper remarks and inquiries, frequently altogether unconnected with the evidence, and the crime she was accused of and believed to have instigated and aided in.

Even in the strongly guarded court, it was on the side of the dock remotest from where M'Gennis stood that the tailor ventured forward to give his evidence, though the murderer's reckless hardihood of bearing altered not for a moment, either in consequence of his appearance, or during the course of his evidence; in fact, he seemed to be principally occupied in answering his mother's queries, and quieting her.

The testimony of the tailor, bearing strongly the impress of truth, singular as it was, was strengthened by that of the brother of the deceased, who seemed greatly affected while deposing that he had met M'Gennis in Claremorris on the day of the murder, and that the handkerchief afterwards found round his sister's neck had been worn by the murderer on that occasion. There was not an iota of evidence for the prisoners, and accordingly a verdict against the son was instantly handed in, though the vile hag was acquitted for want of substantiating evidence against her, to the regret of a crowded court.

After condemnation, M'Gennis was placed in the same cell with Cuffe, the other murderer, who had been also convicted; and nothing could be more dissimilar than their demeanour while together. Cuffe was calm, communicative, and apparently penitent, while M'Gennis was sullen and silent; nor could all the exertions of the clergymen who attended him induce him to acknowledge either guilt or repentance. On the morning after conviction, an alarm was given in the cell by Cuffe, and on entering, the turnkeys found that M'Gennis had anticipated the hangman's office, by rather strangling than hanging himself. He had effected the suicide by means of a slight kerchief appended to the latch of the door, which was scarcely three feet from the floor, and on a level with which he had brought his neck, by shooting the lower portion of his body along the cell-flags from the door; and perhaps not the least remarkable fact connected with this extraordinary suicide is, that the handkerchief was the very one with which he had effected the murder of his wife, and which had been produced on the trial. It is very unusual for any article produced in evidence to find its way to the dock, but in this case it appears the handkerchief must by some strange casualty have come into the hands of the murderer again; and having soaped it highly (he was allowed soap even in the condemned cell), he consummated his fearful deeds with it.

Shortly after the discovery of the suicide, we among others visited the cell to see the body, when, in a conversation with the acute and highly intelligent physician to the prison, he observed what iron nerves the murderer must have possessed to effect such a suicide, as from his own height, and the lowness of the latch, he must, in order to complete the strangulation, have persevered for several minutes in keeping his neck strained, during any one of which, up to the last few, he might have readily recovered himself. The body was still stretched on the flags, and exhibited the appearance of a very powerful frame; and when we considered the desperate and utterly fearless mind that had actuated it, it struck us, and others who spoke on the same subject, with more surprise than ever, that M'Gennis should not have been implicated in outrage and bloodshed long before. Such, however, it would appear, was not the case.

On being examined at the inquest, the other occupant of that fearful cell denied all knowledge of his brother convict's intention to commit suicide, or of his having committed it, until morning, stating that he had slept soundly, and heard no noise whatever during the night—a circumstance which seems rather curious, as the cell was but of small dimensions, and M'Gennis must have certainly made some noise, from the manner in which he had perpetrated the horrid deed. On the other hand, it is well known that persons, no matter how restless or uneasy they may have been previously, almost invariably sleep soundly on the night before execution. All doubts and uncertainty are then over: the mental struggle has ceased.

Rumours, indeed, were afloat that Cuffe had witnessed the commission of the suicide, and that M'Gennis had urged him to do the like also, in order not to give their enemies and the crowd the gratification of witnessing their execution. But how could this circumstance be known, as Cuffe himself did not admit it? Another rumour was, that M'Gennis's mother, at parting with him, had instigated him to the terrible act; and this we would be more inclined to give credit to, from what we have heard of her character, as well as from our own observation of her demeanour throughout the trial.

The crime of murder is always that most revolting and abhorrent to our nature; but when committed on our bosom partner, whom we have sworn to defend and cherish, and who in her helplessness looks up to us as her only stay and protection on earth, it assumes an utterly fiendish character. That it was felt to be so in M'Gennis's case, unfortunately prone as we sometimes are to have sympathy for crime, we were ourselves a witness, as, on the verdict against him being proclaimed, there was an audible buzz of applause through the court; and when the account of his suicide afterwards became public, men expressed the most heart-felt gratification that the world was rid of such a fiend. Yet, singular it is that never since has it transpired, at least as far as we could learn, what motive M'Gennis could have had for the murder of his wife, to whom, as was before stated, he had not been long married. Reports there were, to be sure, that the wife and mother had led an uncomfortable and bickering life since coming together—unfortunately a very frequent case, and one which often produces much misery and crime in humble life; and that it was in consequence of the division of some milk at their homely evening meal, that an altercation arose, which, through the hag's instigation, led to the destruction of the daughter-in-law, and eventually to that of the son. But as these rumours only became current after the murder, it is not easy to attach much credit to them, especially if we place any reliance on the statement that M'Gennis had returned home from Claremorris through fields and bye-paths to avoid being seen, as if he had been contemplating the crime. At all events, whether he had contemplated it, or whether it emanated from a sudden burst of wrath fanned by his parent's wicked suggestions, it seems clearly not to have arisen from jealousy, hatred, or revenge—those passions so generally productive of such crime; and there is no one now living to explain the mystery, as the hag died without a word in explanation of it.

The space we have limited ourselves to, prevents us from saying more in this number of Cuffe, whose crime was of a much more national character, and occupied a good deal the attention of the government of the period; and whose detection, after a lapse of twenty-four years—in fact, after his having declined gradually from the prime of manhood to hoary-headed age—seems to go farther in supporting the popular prejudice that the murderer can never escape detection. But we shall take an early opportunity to detail to the reader his case, and the state of society that led to it. A.

THE BALD BARRYS,

OR

THE BLESSED THORN OF KILDINAN.

"———— Make curl'd-pate ruffians
Quite bald." SHAKSPEARE.

THE breeze of the declining March day blew keenly, as I strode across the extensive fields towards the old burial-ground of Kildinan, in the county of Cork. On reaching the ancient church, I rested on the broken bank that enclosed the cemetery, to contemplate the scene before me, and pause upon the generations of men that have been impelled along the stream of time towards the voiceless ocean of eternity, since the day on which an altar was first erected on this desolate spot, in worship of the Deity. The most accurate observer would scarcely suppose that this enclosure had ever been a place of interment, save that certain little hillocks of two or three spans long, and defined by a rude stone, were scattered along its surface. To a fanciful imagination these would seem to have been the graves of some pigmy nation, concerning

which tradition had lost all remembrance. But the little sepulchres were the resting-places of unfortunate babes that die in the birth, or but wake to a consciousness of life—utter the brief cry of pain, and sleep in death for ever. These unbaptized ones are never permitted to mingle with Christian clay, and are always consigned to these disused cemeteries. With this exception, the old churchyard had long ceased to receive a human tenant, and its foundation could scarcely be traced beneath the rank grass. The father of the present proprietor of the land had planted the whole space with fir-trees, and these flourishing in the rich soil formed by decomposed human bodies for many a foot beneath, have shot up to an unusual size, and furnish a proof that even in death man is not wholly useless, and that, when his labour is ended, his carcase may fertilize the sod impoverished by his greedy toil. In these tall firs a colony of rooks had established their airy city, and while the young settlers were building new habitations, the old citizens of the grove were engaged in repairing the damage their homes had received from the storms of winter; and the shrill discordant voices of the sable multitude seemed to mock the repose of them that occupied the low and silent mansions beneath.

While indulging these *grave* reflections, I saw a man approach by the path I lately trod. He was far advanced in the decline of life; his tall figure, which he supported with a long staff, was wrapped in a blue-grey coat that folded close under a hair cincture, and the woollen hat, susceptible of every impression, was drawn over his face, as if to screen it from the sharp blast that rushed athwart his way. He suddenly stopped, then fixed his glance upon a certain spot of the burial ground where stood a blasted and branchless whitethorn, that seemed to have partaken of the ruin of the ancient fabric, over whose grass-grown foundation it yet lingered. Then raising his eyes to heaven, he sank upon his knees, while his lips moved as if in the utterance of some fervid ejaculation. Surely, thought I, this old man's elevated devotion, at such a place and time, proceeds not solely from the ordinary motives that induce the penitent to pray—some circumstance, some tradition connected with this ancient place, has wrought his piety to this pitch of enthusiasm. Thus did my fancy conjecture at the moment, nor was I mistaken.

As the old man rose from his attitude of supplication, I approached and said, "My friend, I hope you will pardon this intrusion, for your sudden and impassioned devotion has greatly awakened my curiosity."

He immediately answered in the Irish tongue, "I was only begging mercy and pardon for the souls who in the close darkness of the prison-house cannot relieve themselves, and beseeching that heaven would cease to visit upon the children the guilt of their fathers. This spot brought to my memory an act of sacrilege which my forefathers perpetrated, and for which their descendants yet suffer; and I did not conceive at the moment that a living being beheld me but God.

"Perhaps," he continued, "as you seem to be a stranger in these parts, you have never heard of the Bald Barrys, and the blessed Whitethorn of Kildinan. It is an old tradition, and you may be inclined to name it a legend of superstition; but yonder is the whitethorn, blasted and decayed from the contact of my ancestors' unholy hands; and here stands the last of their name, a homeless wanderer, with no other inheritance than this mark of the curse and crime of his race." So saying, he pulled off the old woollen hat, and exhibited his head perfectly smooth and guiltless of a single hair.

"That old heads should become bald, is no uncommon occurrence," I observed, "and I have seen younger heads as hairless as yours."

"My head," he returned, "from my birth to this moment, never knew a single hair; my father and grandfather endured the same privation, while my great-grandfather was deprived of his long and copious locks in one fearful moment. I shall tell you the story as we go along, if your course lies in the direction of this pathway."

As we proceeded, he delivered the following legend. The old man's phraseology was copious and energetic, qualities which I have vainly striven to infuse into the translation; for an abler pen would fail in our colder English of doing justice to the very poetical language of the narrator.

"Many a biting March has passed over the heads of men since Colonel Barry lived at Lisnegar. He was of the true blood of the old Strongbow chiefs, who became sovereign princes in the land; and forming alliances with the ancient owners of the soil, renounced the Saxon connection and name. This noble family gloried in the title of M'Adam;* and the colonel did not shame his descent. He kept open house for all comers, and every day an ox was killed and consumed at Lisnegar. All the gentlemen of the province thronged thither, hunting and hawking, and feasting and coshering; while the hall was crowded with harpers and pipers, *caroughs* and *buckaughs*, and *shanachies* and story-tellers, who came and went as they pleased, in constant succession. I myself," said the old man, sighing, "have seen a remnant of these good old times, but now they are vanished for ever; the genius of hospitality has retired from the chieftain's hall to the hovel on the moor; and the wanderer turns with a sigh from lofty groves and stately towers, to the shelter of the peasant's shed!

David Barry and his seven brothers lived with M'Adam, and were of his own name and race; and whether he enjoyed the sport of the chase, or took the diversion of shooting, or moved among the high and titled of the land, they always accompanied him, and formed a sort of body-guard, to share his sports or assert his quarrels. At that time, on the banks of the Bride, near the ruined tower of Shanacloch, lived a man named Edmund Barry. A thick and briary covert on his farm had been for many years the haunt of a fox celebrated all over the south of Ireland for the extraordinary speed and prowess he evinced in the many attempts made to hunt him down. Many gallant and noble huntsmen sought the honour of bearing home his brush, but in vain; and it was a remarkable fact, that after tiring out both hounds and horses in the arduous pursuit, and though his flight might extend over a considerable part of the province, he invariably returned at night to his favourite covert. A treaty of peace, it would seem, had been tacitly instituted between Edmund Barry and the fox. Barry's poultry for a series of years, whether they sought the banks of the Bride or the neighbourhood of the barn door, never suffered by the dangerous vicinity: Reynard would mix with Barry's dogs and spend an hour of social intercourse with them, as familiarly as if he belonged to the same species; and Barry gave his wild crafty friend the same protection and licence that he permitted his own domestic curs. The fame of this strange union of interests was well known; and to this day the memory of Barry's *madra roe* survives in the traditions of the country.

One evening as M'Adam and his train returned from a long and unsuccessful chase of Edmund Barry's fox, their route lay by the ruins of the ancient church of Kildinan; near this sacred spot a whitethorn tree had stood, and its beauty and bloom were the theme of every tongue. The simple devotee who poured his orisons to God beneath its holy shade believed that the hands of guardian spirits pruned its luxuriance and developed its form of beauty—that dews from heaven were sprinkled by angel hands to produce its rich and beautiful blossoms, which, like those of the thorn of Glastenbury, loaded the black winds of December with many a token of holy fragrance, in welcome of the heavenly advent of HIM who left his Father's throne to restore to the sons of Adam the lost inheritance of heaven. M'Adam was charmed with the beauty of the tree, and little regarding the sanctity or the superstitious awe attached to its character, was resolved to transfer it to Lisnegar, that his lawn might possess that rare species of thorn which blooms in beauty when all its sisters of the field are bare and barren.

Next day, when M'Adam signified his intention of removing the whitethorn of Kildinan, his people stood aghast at his impiety, and one and all declared they would suffer a thousand deaths rather than perpetrate so audacious a sacrilege. Now, M'Adam was a man of high blood and haughty bearing, and accustomed at all times to the most rigid enforcement of his commands. When he found his men unhesitatingly refuse to obey him, his anger sent the glow of resentment to flush his cheek; he spurned the earth in a paroxysm of rage, exclaiming, 'Varlets! of all that have eaten the bread of M'Adam, and reposed under the shadow of his protection, are there none free from the trammels of superstitious folly, to execute his commands?'

* Dr Smith, in his History of the County of Cork, thus mentions Colonel Barry:—"The town of Rathcormack also belongs to this gentleman, who is descended from an ancient branch of the Barry family, commonly called M'Adam, who have been seated here 500 years, and formerly sat in parliament; particularly David de Barry of Rathcormack, who sat in the upper house, in a parliament held 30th Edward I., 1302. South of Rathcormack is a fair stone bridge over the *Bride*, upon which is this inscription.—'The foundation of this bridge was laid June 22, 1734; Colonel Redmund Barry, Jonas Devonshire, and James Barry, gentlemen, being overseers thereof.'"

'Here are seven of your own name and race,' cried David Barry, 'men sworn to stand and fall together, who obey no commands but yours, and acknowledge no law but your will. The whitethorn of Kildinan shall leave its sacred tenement, if strong hands and brave hearts can effect its removal. If it be profanation to disturb the tree which generations have reverenced, the curse for sacrilege rests not with us: and did M'Adam command us to tear the blessed gold from the shrine of a saint, we would not hesitate to obey—we were but executing the will of our legal chief.'

Such was the flattering unction which the retainers of M'Adam applied to their souls, as they proceeded to desecrate the spot hallowed by the reverence of ages, and around whose holy thorn superstition had drawn a mystic circle, within whose limit human foot may not intrude. Men have not yet forgotten this lesson of the feudal school; the sack of cities, the shrieks of women, the slaughter of thousands, are yet perpetrated without ruth or remorse in obedience to superior command, and the sublime *Te Deum* swells to consecrate the savage atrocity.

On that evening M'Adam saw the beautiful whitethorn planted in his lawn, and many were the thanks and high the reward of the faithful few who rose superior to the terrors of superstition in the execution of his commands. But his surprise was great when David Barry broke in upon his morning's repose, to announce that the tree had disappeared during the night, and was again planted where it had stood for ages before, in the ancient cemetery of Kildinan. M'Adam, conjecturing that this object of the people's veneration had been secretly conveyed by them during the night to its former abode, dispatched his retainers again to fetch it, with strict injunctions to lie in watch around it till morning. The brothers, obedient to the call of their chief, brought the whitethorn back, and having supported its stem, and carefully covered its roots with rich mould, after the most approved method of planting, prepared to watch round it all night, under the bare canopy of heaven. The night was long and dark, and their eyes sleepless; the night-breeze had sunk to repose, and all nature seemed hushed in mysterious awe. A deep and undefinable feeling of dread stole over the hearts of the midnight watchers; and they who could have rejoiced in the din of battle, were appalled by this fearful calm. Obedience to the commands of M'Adam could not steel their bosoms against the goadings of remorse, and the ill-suppressed murmur rose against their sacrilegious chief. As the night advanced, impelled by some strange fear, they extended their circle round the mysterious tree. At length David, the eldest and bravest of the brothers, fell asleep. His short and fitful snatches of repose were disturbed by wild and indistinct dreams; but as his slumbers settled, these vague images passed away, and the following vision was presented to the sleeper's imagination:—

He dreamt that as he was keeping watch where he lay, by the blessed thorn of Kildinan, there stood before him a venerable man; his radiant features and shining vesture lighted all the space around, and pierced awful and far into the surrounding darkness. His hand held a crosier; his head was crowned with a towering mitre; his white beard descended to the girdle that encircled his rich pontificals; and he looked, in his embroidered 'sandal shoon' and gorgeous array, the mitred abbot of some ancient monastery, which the holy rage of the Saxon reformation had levelled in the dust. But the visage of the sainted man was fearfully severe in its expression, and the sleeping mortal fell prostrate before the unearthly eye that sent its piercing regards to search his inmost soul.

'Wretch,' said the shining apparition, in a voice of thunder, 'raise thy head and hear thy doom, and that of thy sacrilegious brothers.'

Barry did raise his head in obedience to the terrific mandate, though his soul sank within him, before his dreadful voice and eye of terror.

'Because you,' continued the holy man, 'have violated the sanctity of the place consecrated to God, you and your race shall wander homeless vagabonds, and your devoted heads, as a sign and a warning to future times, shall abide the pelting of every storm, and the severity of every changing season, unprotected by the defence which nature has bestowed upon all men, till your name and race be faded from the land.'

At this wrathful denunciation the terrified man falls prostrate to deprecate the fearful malediction, and awakes with a cry of terror which alarms the listeners. As he proceeds to reveal the terrible vision which his sleeping eyes beheld, the crash of thunder, the flash of lightning, and the sweep of the whirlwind, envelope them. As the day dawns, they are found senseless, at a considerable distance from the spot where they had lain the preceding night to guard the fatal tree. The thorn had likewise disappeared; and, strange to relate, the raven hair which clustered in long ringlets, that any wearer of the ancient *coolin* might well have envied, no longer adorns their manly heads. The fierce whirlwind, that in mockery of human daring had tossed them, like the stubble of the field, had realized the dream of the sleeper, and borne off their long profuse hair in its vengeful sweep."

Such was the narrative of the last representative of the "Bald Barrys." I bequeath it to the reader without note or comment. He of course will regard it according to his particular bias—will wonder how an imaginative people will attribute the downfall of families, or the entailment of hereditary disease, to the effect of supernatural intervention; or exclaim, as some very pious and moral men have done, that

> "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

E. W.

THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.—How often have I seen a company of men, who were disposed to be riotous, checked all at once into decency by the accidental entrance of an amiable woman; while her good sense and obliging deportment charmed them into at least a temporary conviction that there is nothing so beautiful as female excellence, nothing so delightful as female conversation. To form the manners of men, nothing contributes so much as the cast of the women they converse with. Those who are most associated with women of virtue and understanding will always be found the most amiable characters. Such society, beyond everything else, rubs off the protrusions that give to many an ungracious roughness; it produces a polish more perfect and pleasing than that which is received by a general commerce with the world. This last is often specious, but commonly superficial; the other is the result of gentler feelings, and a more elegant humanity: the heart itself is moulded, and habits of undissembled courtesy are formed.—*Fordyce.*

OUR ATTACHMENT TO LIFE.—The young man, till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and if needs were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now—shall I confess a truth? I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like misers' farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away "like a weaver's shuttle." Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide that smoothly bears human life to eternity, and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth—the face of town and country—the unspeakable rural solitudes—and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived—to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age, or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave! Any alteration on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household gods plant a terribly fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood. They do not willingly seek Lavinian shores. A new state of being staggers me. Sun and sky, and breeze and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fire-side conversations, and jests and irony—do not these things go out with life? Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides when you are pleasant with him?—*Life and Remains of Charles Lamb.*

A man cannot get his lesson by heart so quick as he can practise it: he will repeat it in his actions.

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